



## Analysis

## Less than 2 °C? An Economic-Environmental Evaluation of the Paris Agreement

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## ABSTRACT

The literature dedicated to the analysis of the different climate agreements has usually focused on the effectiveness of the aims for emissions in the light of the advance in climate change. This article quantifies the variation in emissions that the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) will entail and their financial allocation and policies country-by-country and regionally. The objective is evaluating the Paris Agreement feasibility regarding the INDCs and its economic and environmental constraints. The criteria through which the 161 INDCs are analysed are as follows: i/ socio-economic impact of the transition; ii/ focus on energy management; iii/ substitution of non-renewable sources; iv/ the role of technology; v/ equality of the transition; vi/ compliance with emission reductions. The results obtained show that the Paris Agreement excessively relies on external financial support (41.4%). Moreover, its unilateralist approach, the socio-economic and biophysical constraints could be the underlying cause of the ineffectiveness of the 2 °C objective. This way, each country would emit an average of 37.8% more than in the years 2005–2015. When this is weighted, the figure would be a 19.3% increase, due mainly to the increases in China and India. These figures would lead the temperatures up to 3°–4 °C.

## 1. Introduction

The consequences of climate change induced by human activity are a growing concern for the international community (IPCC, 2014; Melillo et al., 2014). Evident effects such as extreme meteorological phenomena, rising temperatures and rising sea levels show the rapid climatic adaptation of natural ecosystems. The rapid increase in these impacts and the fact that abrupt changes could arise leads to the conclusion that the cost of transferring the responsibility for putting it right to the coming generations becomes ever higher. In this sense, the IPCC (2014) has warned that if, by 2050, we have not managed to reduce the level of emissions with respect to 2010 by between 25% and 72%, then maintaining the rise in world temperatures to below 2 °C with respect to preindustrial levels will be “more improbable than probable”. Besides the most visible consequences today, if the temperatures rose by more than 3 °C–4 °C, humanity would face a scenario of massive extinction of species, entailing risks for human health and severe restrictions on access to food and water, so vital for survival (IPCC, 2014). Achieving this goal involves phasing out fossil fuels whereby around 82% of the current reserves of coal, 49% of natural gas reserves and 33% of the oil reserves should remain underground in order to avoid an increase in

temperatures of more than 2 °C (McGlade and Ekins, 2015).

Regarding these concerns, in December 2015, the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) was celebrated, made up of 188 countries, and whose most important result was the Paris Agreement (UN, 2015) and the collection of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) submitted by each of the participating countries. After de burial of the Kyoto Protocol, the current agreement is an unilateral vision in which the players establish their own voluntary objectives (Spash, 2016) through the INDCs. Although the agreement indicates that the main priority is to “hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels”, during the COP21, the participants were sufficiently optimistic as to speak openly of 1.5 °C. Not only this, but in spite of the fact that they incorporated such equality criteria as the obligation of Developed Countries (DC) to a greater reduction in emissions and the channelling of financial resources to Least Developed Countries (LDC), the COP21 succeeded in involving some countries with medium incomes in these differentiated efforts (Viola, 2016).

In response to global concerns of these issues, a widening literature on sustainability transitions has emerged in recent years (Markaard et al., 2012). Literature on climate summits mostly evaluates whether

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they comply with emissions limits or not (den Elzen et al., 2011; UNEP, 2010; Höhne, 2012). Considering COP21 and the Paris Agreement (2015), main contributions are related to its impacts in energy technologies evolution (Peters, in press; Lacal Arantegui and Jäger-Waldau, 2017) or evaluate possible transition pathways under its contexts in different regions (Liobikiénė and Butkus, 2017; Van de Graaf, 2017; Gao, 2016). Some works, conversely, points out difficulties to accomplish the COP21 objectives according to geopolitical and governance limits from a general perspective of the Paris Agreement (Spash, 2016; Viola, 2016). Moreover, an increasing number of governments, municipalities and NGOs are creating its own low carbon transitions plans according to their own criteria, or those established in the aforementioned climate summits. Thus, on the basis of Wiseman et al. (2013), Nieto and Carpintero (2016) deal with a more in-depth analysis of 19 low-carbon transition plans from government sources and other dependent agencies, NGOs and research centres.

In this article, Paris Agreement is evaluated on the light of biophysical, technological and economic limits, throughout a systematic analysis of each of the 161 INDCs submitted by the 188 countries in COP21.

Thus, the aim of this article is to put these INDCs under the same microscope that analysed some previous plans (Nieto and Carpintero, 2016), situating the focus on the socio-economic impacts, international equality, technology, energy and emissions. This analysis will allow us to evaluate the feasibility of the Paris Agreement policies in complying with its own objectives through the national commitments (INDCs). In the same way, we will evaluate the main limitations of the imposed governance and finance framework. In order to achieve these aims, a systematic analysis of the policies, the emission reduction commitments and the funding needs for implanting INDCs has been carried out.

The article is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the methodological process used to give homogeneity to the data offered by the INDCs. Section 3 sets out the main results of the exhaustive analysis of these INDCs. Section 4 confronts the results extracted from INDCs with the biophysical restrictions and the literature. Finally, Section 5 summarizes the article's main conclusions.

## 2. Methodology

The flexibility of the Paris Agreement has led to a lack of systematic presentation of the INDCs. Therefore, this paper proposes a methodology to homogenize data and categorize the information (for more detailed information, consult Annex A, as well as the repository of INDCs).<sup>1</sup> We have examined a total of 161 INDCs representing 188 countries that account for 97.8% of the world's emissions.

In order to achieve the aims of this article, we have paid special attention to the policies of mitigation as opposed to those of adaptation because of their economic (Buchner et al., 2015) and environmental importance. We have noted (as far as possible) the data concerning the objectives for reducing sectoral and global emissions, the policies for achieving the said objectives and their funding, with the greatest possible breakdown. We have also studied the proposed financial mechanisms and the nature of the agents who would lead the transition. We have grouped the different countries with respect to their level of income in accordance with the World Bank's (WB) classification, establishing a distinct group for the 12 most contaminating countries on the planet (Top 12) in 2014 (72.2% of the total emissions) because of their relevance for climate policies.

With reference to emissions, the INDCs have both unconditional and conditional objectives. The former would be carried out exclusively with domestic resources, while the latter would be conditional on receiving outside assistance. In general, the INDCs presented some problems that made the analysis more difficult; such as the discrepancies

between the year of reference and that of the time horizon. To resolve this issue, we have discarded those INDCs that do not have the year 2030 as their time horizon or the reference year outside the range 2005–2015. This reference year has been chosen because of two reasons. Firstly, EU used 2005 as one of the reference years (along with 1990 and 2030) in its Communication titled *A roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050*. Secondly, most of the INDCs are within this time range, so it was reasonable to use it. Besides, a differential analysis has been carried out of the 12 most contaminating countries (Top12), for which we were able to establish a common reference year of 2005.

On the other hand, the reduction objectives are presented in different ways:

i/ As a partial and/or sectoral objective: for instance, a proportion of renewable sources in the energy mix or objectives that are merely relative to one sector of the economy. These have not been considered in the calculation of emissions reductions.

ii/ In GHG emissions intensity (CO<sub>2</sub>eq/GDP). To calculate the net variation in emissions, we proceed as set out in the *Methodological Annex*.

iii/ As emissions reductions with respect to a base year. The only countries obliged to do so are those in Annex I<sup>2</sup> and, with some exceptions, the only ones who do so in this way. No additional calculation is needed beyond establishing the base range and/or horizon year.

iv/ As emissions reductions with respect to a trend scenario (business as usual). This is the most common scenario used by all the countries not in Annex 1, except Brazil.<sup>3</sup> To calculate the variation in absolute terms with respect to the base range, we proceed as detailed in the *Methodological Annex*.

Taking a conservative stance, we have considered that the trend and the real variation in emissions are the same for the Annex I countries, assuming that they will carry out all the promised policies and that they will, indeed, reach the appointed goals. In addition, we have calculated the weighted emissions with respect to each country's contribution to global emissions in 2013, the last year for which reliable, homogeneous data exist through the Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR) of the European Commission.

On the other hand, the necessary funding for each plan has been broken down into mitigation, adaptation and other expenses. The INDCs provide figures in dollars (without specifying any basis) to be expended from 2020 to 2030. Financial effort is measured as the share of financial funding allocated by the INDC over GDP (2010 constant dollars at market prices). External funding and its proportion over total funding have been evaluated as well. Similarly, we have obtained the amount of funding required per unit percent of emissions reduction. This information has been obtained directly from the data facilitated by the INDCs. When not provided, it has been made the assumption that the share of external funding equals the proportion of conditional emissions reduction over total emissions reduction.

Finally, it has been summarized the main policies with respect to the different sectors of each country, as well as a summary table of the main policies to which each country is committed. The policies are broken down according to the Directives of the IPCC for the national inventories of greenhouse gases (IPCC, 1996). However, the breakdown of the energy sector has been used due to its strategic nature for some INDCs.

<sup>2</sup> Industrialized countries members of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1992, plus countries with economies in transition (the EIT Parties), including the Russian Federation, the Baltic States, and several Central and Eastern European States.

<sup>3</sup> Unless explicitly mentioned alternatively, when a particular country is mentioned, the reference is its INDC, which can be consulted in the UNFCCC repository, as explained in footnote 1.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>.

**Table 1**  
Information criteria.

	General information	Financial information
Low quality	Low or none emissions information and/or low or none policies information.	No financial information.
Medium quality	Sufficient emissions information and/or sectoral disaggregated policies information.	Financial information in total amounts.
High quality	Good emissions information and highly deep disaggregated policies information.	Financial information disaggregated by area (mitigation/adaptation) and/or by policies/sectors.

Source: Own compilation on the basis of the INDCs submitted to COP21.

### 3. Towards a New Landscape: The INDCs in Detail

An exhaustive analysis of all the INDCs has been carried out with respect to four criteria: i/ the quality of the information provided; ii/ the proposed policies; iii/ the funding needed to carry them out and, finally; iv/ the estimated reduction in emissions.

#### 3.1. Quality of Information

The greatest difficulties involved in carrying out this research concerned the lack of homogeneity in the data. The INDCs come from different sources, the quantity and quality of the information are highly variable and even contain errors. The INDCs have been divided with respect to the quality of the general and funding information offered, according to the criteria of [Table 1](#).

According to what can be seen in [Table 7](#), the quality of the information follows a trajectory which is inversely proportional to the level of income of the country collecting the said information. Only 18.5% of the plans can be considered as offering general information of high quality, and only 12.7% as far as finance is concerned. In addition, only the plans from countries with medium-low and low incomes offer a higher than average quality in both categories.

These correspond mostly to small island states and African countries. For the former, climate change supposes the greatest possible threat (being submerged under the sea), while the latter see in the Paris Agreement an opportunity for sustainable development aided externally. The low quality of financial information provided by the OECD countries does not provide any data at all about the funding of their policies (two thirds of the plans have been classified as of “low quality”). The lack of any common standards or adequate auditing of the information received means that the objectives are difficult to compare or measure, which in turn makes any effective control over compliance almost impossible.

#### 3.2. Mitigation Policies: Energy, Industry, Agriculture, Waste and LULUCF

The different policies under review in the INDCs respond to the following sectoral structure: i/ energy - electricity generation, transport and housing -; ii/ industrial processes; iii/ use of solvents and other products, iv/ agriculture, v/ change in land use and forestry (LULUCF) and, vi/ waste. [Table 2](#) summarizes the principal policies by sectors and each one is assigned a code to facilitate understanding and clarity in the other summary tables.

This analysis is dealt with from the sectoral point of view by policies and, secondly, from the regional point of view by country and income group. In order to evaluate most common policies at world level, it has been calculated the number of countries choosing each policy over total countries. Then to address the regional analysis, the same process has been made in each income group region. Further information on the method is in the [Methodological Annex](#).

##### 3.2.1. Analysis by Sector and Policy

As can be seen in [Table 3](#), the policies that stand out most of all are those aiming for an electric mix based on renewable energies (95.2% of

the INDCs). This policy is followed by transversal efficiency measures for all sectors and the increase in green cover through LULUCF. Some of these measures such as the electrification of the economy and decentralized electricity generation (23% and 31% respectively) take on even greater importance on a regional scale. With respect to the decentralization of energy, oil rich countries stand out; countries such as Nigeria, which aims to install off-grid photovoltaic panels, or Equatorial Guinea, with its “home energy” programme. In addition to those already mentioned, an important role will be played in the future of energy by natural gas and the combined cycle power stations, according to what can be seen from the INDCs.

As for the transport subsector, there is a great bid to foster public transport and efficiency policies for private vehicles (29.4% and 27.0% of countries, respectively). The latter goal the countries hope to achieve through incentive-disincentive tax policies, in particular through the promotion of imports (important in the small island states), or the establishment of a carbon tax on inefficient vehicles. Although the commitment to biofuels is not at all generalized (18.3% of the plans), it is important demographically and/or economically for some countries that are committed to it, such as Argentina, and especially India. Far less important is the promotion of the electric or hybrid vehicle (13.5% of countries), although we find a relevant exception in India, which refers to its National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 (NEMMP) detailing its action measures ([Government of India, 2012](#)).

In the industrial sector, what stand out are the measures to improve efficiency related with better technologies and the cogeneration of energy. In addition to reduction measures in sectors with especially high emissions, such as that of cement, structural measures are also envisaged, such as modernization and increasing the value added of industry and boosting the service sector of the economy (China). The use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) and carbon capture and utilization (CCU) (Saudi Arabia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Malawi, Norway, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Venezuela), as well as the use of clean technologies, are other measures aimed at reducing emissions. Furthermore, countries with an extractive industry do not provide for leaving their resources underground. They concern only an improvement in the extraction, processing and distribution processes, as well as a reduction in emissions due to gas flaring.

As for the waste sector, classic measures are considered, such as reduction (with a smaller presence), recycling and reuse, as well as what is usually called “recovery”. They also consider the transformation of waste into energy through biogas or biomass, and the improvement of rubbish tips or their construction in countries that lack an adequate waste management (26.2% of the INDCs). For its part, India, with an important public health problem related with the management of human waste in the cities, aims to promote an ambitious sewage network, beginning with the most basic aspect: the installation of lavatories in homes. In the agricultural sector, especially in low-income countries, the aims of “modernization” abound, although they do not specify how this should be done. Some countries, such as Afghanistan and Nigeria among others mention to apply for the so-called Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), even though it is more an adaptation program instead of mitigation. On the other hand, measures are also planned to reduce methane emissions in the rice fields, to control the increased use

**Table 2**  
Overview of main policies in INDCs.

Sector	Subsector	Policy	Action	Code
Energy	Electricity generation	Transition to renewable and cleaner technologies.	Renewable deployment: solar, wind, hydro.	G1
			Combined cycle power stations. Switch to natural gas.	G2
			Off and on-grid roof solar panels, solar thermal and small hydro.	G3
			Substitute charcoal by electricity/Electrification	G4
			Best thermoelectric generation (coal and gas).	G5
			Reconstruction, construction or improvement of electricity grid.	G6
			Efficient technologies.	G7
	Residential	Reduction Consumption efficiency.	Absolute reduction in energy consumption	G8
			Enhanced technologies for heating and cooking (substitution of charcoal).	R1
			Best lighting technologies.	R2
			Enhance buildings efficiency/solar thermal installation.	R3
			Social awareness.	R4
	Transport	Transport efficiency	Encouraging acquisition of hybrid and efficient vehicles.	T1
			Discourage acquisition of inefficient vehicles.	T2
		Fuels substitution.	Carbon tax (emissions).	T3
			Promotion and research on biofuels.	T4
		Structural change.	Promotion of electric and hybrid vehicle.	T5
			Mass public transport.	T6
			Intermodality and switch to an efficient transport system.	T7
			Spatial and urban planning.	T8
			Improvement of road system.	T9
			Non-motorized transport.	T10
Sector	Policy	Action	Code	
Industry	Process efficiency.	Improve the overall efficiency of industry.	I1	
		Energy cogeneration.	I2	
		Measures oriented to industrial ecology.	I3	
	Sectoral Structural change.	Reduce emissions in cement industry.	I4	
		Modernization and switch to an enhanced value added industry.	I5	
		Tertiarisation (China).	I6	
	Emissions Extractive industry	Carbon capture and storage/use.	I7	
		Reduce flaring and venting.	I8	
		Improvements in processes, efficiency and distribution.	I9	
Waste	Circular economy and reduction	Reduce, Reuse, Recycling.	W1	
		Transform waste to energy.	W2	
		Social awareness.	W3	
	Management Sanitation	Improve landfill management, construct new ones and promotion of compost.	W4	
		Sanitation improvement in residential sector.	W5	
Agriculture	Structural change.	Modernization and intensification of agriculture.	A1	
		Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA).	A2	
		Reduce emissions of rice fields.	A3	
	Sectoral Others	Control of fertilizers and pesticides.	A4	
		Methane capture.	A5	
LULUCF	Extend vegetation cover	Avoid deforestation.	L1	
		Afforestation and reforestation.	L2	

Source: Own compilation based on the INDCs reported to COP21.

of fertilizers and pesticides and, finally, to capture methane from the enteric fermentation of cattle and manure.

Finally, LULUCF sector is one of those that are becoming more important, particularly for those countries that already have a large surface area of forest. Of greatest importance in this sphere are: the fight against deforestation, the reforestation of deforested areas, and the afforestation of areas previously dedicated to other uses. Outstanding in this respect are such countries as Brazil (as a carbon sink), or others with such large populations as Bangladesh, and even those with such enormous economic and environmental importance as China.

### 3.2.2. Regional Analysis

This sectoral policy view would be incomplete without a regional insight, which has a key relevance in the feasibility of accomplishing the Agreement. Fig. 1 shows the deviation of each top 15 policy share by income group from the world average. It can be seen, for instance, that the electrification of the economy and its decentralized generation take on greater importance in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Charcoal is used abundantly in these countries as a source of primary

energy for heating and cooking (see Fig. 1).

This is why low-income countries also stand out with respect to improvements in cooking and heating efficiency. In the same way, the lower middle-income countries are comparatively more committed to the reduction, recycling and reuse of waste than the rest, as well as to the fight against deforestation. The upper middle-income countries are committed above the average to promoting biofuels and decentralizing the generation of electricity. On the other hand, the high-income countries champion the improvement of their public transport systems and the efficiency of their industries. Finally, the countries of the OECD, in spite of the bias caused by the lack of data, seem to be more committed to natural gas and combined cycle power stations. In general terms, it can be seen that low income countries make above average use of the Top 15 policies.

These tendencies are confirmed when we analyse the relative weight of each set of sectoral policies over the total number of countries. Fig. 2 shows the deviation of sectoral relevance (measured as the number of countries taking policies from each sector, see Annex A) of each region from world average. Thus, LDCs have an above average impact on the policies concerning the generation of electricity, housing,



**Table 3**  
Top 15 policies.

Code	Policies	Proportion
G1	Renewable deployment: solar, wind, hydro.	95.2%
G7	Efficient technologies.	44.4%
L1	Avoid deforestation	43.7%
L2	Afforestation and reforestation.	41.3%
G3	Off and on-grid roof solar panels, solar thermal and small hydro.	31.0%
T6	Mass public transport.	29.4%
T1	Encouraging acquisition of hybrid and efficient vehicles.	27.0%
W4	Improve landfill management, construct new ones and promotion of compost.	26.2%
G4	Substitute charcoal by electricity/Electrification	23.0%
W2	Transform waste to energy.	23.0%
G2	Combined cycle power stations. Switch to natural gas.	20.6%
R1	Enhanced technologies for heating and cooking (substitution of charcoal).	20.6%
W1	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.	19.8%
T4	Promotion and research on biofuels.	18.3%
I1	Improve the overall efficiency of industry.	15.1%

Source: Own compilation on the basis of INDCs submitted to the COP21. Information provided by total parties with policies.

waste management, agriculture and LULUCF; while DC do so in transport and the industrial sector. The importance of the abovementioned sectors, in the former case, follows an inverse relation to income, while in the second case, the relation is positive. This regional distribution of the policies will have important consequences for the efficacy of the Paris Agreement in reaching its goals (Table 4).

### 3.3. Finance, Equity and Leadership of the Transition

Means of implementation are needed to set these policies in motion. Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement establishes that DCs (Annex I countries, i.e. OECD) should provide LDCs with financial resources. In addition, there should be reports every two years on the resources mobilized. In this sense, the great majority of the INDCs of the LDCs incorporate a series of unconditional objectives, assumed by the country itself, and other objectives conditioned by the reception of external support. Besides financial resources, other external support contemplated in the Agreement includes capacity building and technology transfer.

All the figures set out in this section must be considered with caution, due to the lack of homogeneity and clarity of the INDCs. Thus, the proportions destined to mitigation policies (83.2%), as opposed to those of adaptation, are often biased due to the high figures given by India (2500MM\$), Iran (927.5MM\$) and South Africa (898.79MM\$) that account for 79.8% of the total funding. The group of countries that make the greatest effort in terms of finance with respect to their GDP are the low-income countries, due both to their reduced level of GDP and the great quantity of external finance they have to account for. Specifically, 87.1% of all the financing required by the INDCs over the low-income countries which has been evaluated corresponds to external resources. The choice, in Table 5, of the last indicator instead of the first is due to the fact that it is excessively biased because of the lack of data. It can be observed that the majority of countries requiring external financing do so in a relatively high proportion. This is such that a conservative estimate (only including the external financing explicitly mentioned) shows that almost half (41.4%) of the funding needed to completely implement the INDCs depends on international cooperation. Of course, this is a challenge in the design of climate funding which we shall deal with below.

In order to channel the public and private resources that finance the mitigation and adaptation policies from DCs to LDCs, the UNFCCC has developed a complex system of climate funding (Buchner et al., 2015; Román, 2013). The ones most cited by the INDCs are the Green Climate

Fund (GCF), the Green Environment Facility (GEF) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) for compensation. The CDM should be a zero sum game (Eriksson et al., 2014) in which investment in mitigation projects in LDCs generates 'Certified Emission Reductions' (CER) that can be used to increase emissions by the same amount that the investment reduced them, or alternatively can be sold on the carbon markets. In total, 42 countries want to gain access or have already gained access and want to continue with the CDM, not counting those who have expressed a desire to use unspecified market mechanisms.

The funding sources proposed by countries say a lot about the agents who will guide the practical set up of the INDCs. Depending on whether the conditional part of the external support for LDCs is larger or smaller, the transition will be influenced by the criteria established by international institutions or by particular interests of countries with which they reach bilateral agreements. In addition, naturally, the degree of importance given to the public or private sector will have consequences in the transition's directive criteria, its effectiveness, and the coordination between policies and how fast the changes are implemented.

Based on the finance sections of INDCs, it can be seen that in low-income countries, more importance is given to external support (in particular the GCF), donations, carbon markets and the CDM. The weakness of these States means that, in addition, the private sector plays an important role. Those outstanding for their confidence in the private sector are Burkina Faso, Liberia and Sierra Leone. For its heterogeneity of agents, Uganda is also worthy of note, with a transition led by the public sector, but with the participation of the local communities, public-private partnerships (PPP) and the international community.

In the medium-low income countries, public participation and multilateral finance institutions have greater weight. The external support continues to be the principal driving force of the transition, although bilateral agreements are gaining weight, while the participation in such control mechanisms as CDMs are falling slightly (this is a constant as income rises). While Indonesia mainly has confidence in the private sector, Bolivia does so in the public sector and demands that the external support should be totally non-returnable. As the countries' level of income rises, the financial autonomy to put the transition into practice also rises.

In the medium-high income countries, Colombia mainly has confidence in the private sector and tries to involve the university system in the transition; while Cuba, on the other hand, continues to have confidence in a transition through the public sector, with such measures as the distribution of clean technologies for the residential sector (lighting and cooking). China, however, deploys some very diverse means led by the State, such as the PPP, favourable taxation, public contracts, green credit and financial guidance through the public bank, disaster insurance, etc. As we analyse the INDCs of the countries with higher incomes, the information becomes scarcer, but it continues with the dynamic of increasing the internal autonomy and government leadership.

### 3.4. Reducing Emissions?

Since one of the objectives of this article is the evaluation of the efficacy of the INDCs to comply with the Paris Agreement, the calculation of the variation in absolute emissions for each one is fundamental. The said calculations have had to be done because of the disparity in the forms of presentation of the contributions and have been carried out according to what is set out in the section and annex on methodology. Table 7 shows these results. As explained in Section 2, there has been needed to estimate emissions reductions from the INDC's data for those not giving the information as a reduction from a base year. Taking the simple arithmetic means, and if the mitigation policies (BAU) are not carried out, then each country would double (an increase of 95.7%) their emissions of GHGs in 2030 as compared to their defined level between 2005 and 2015. In order to get a better adjusted

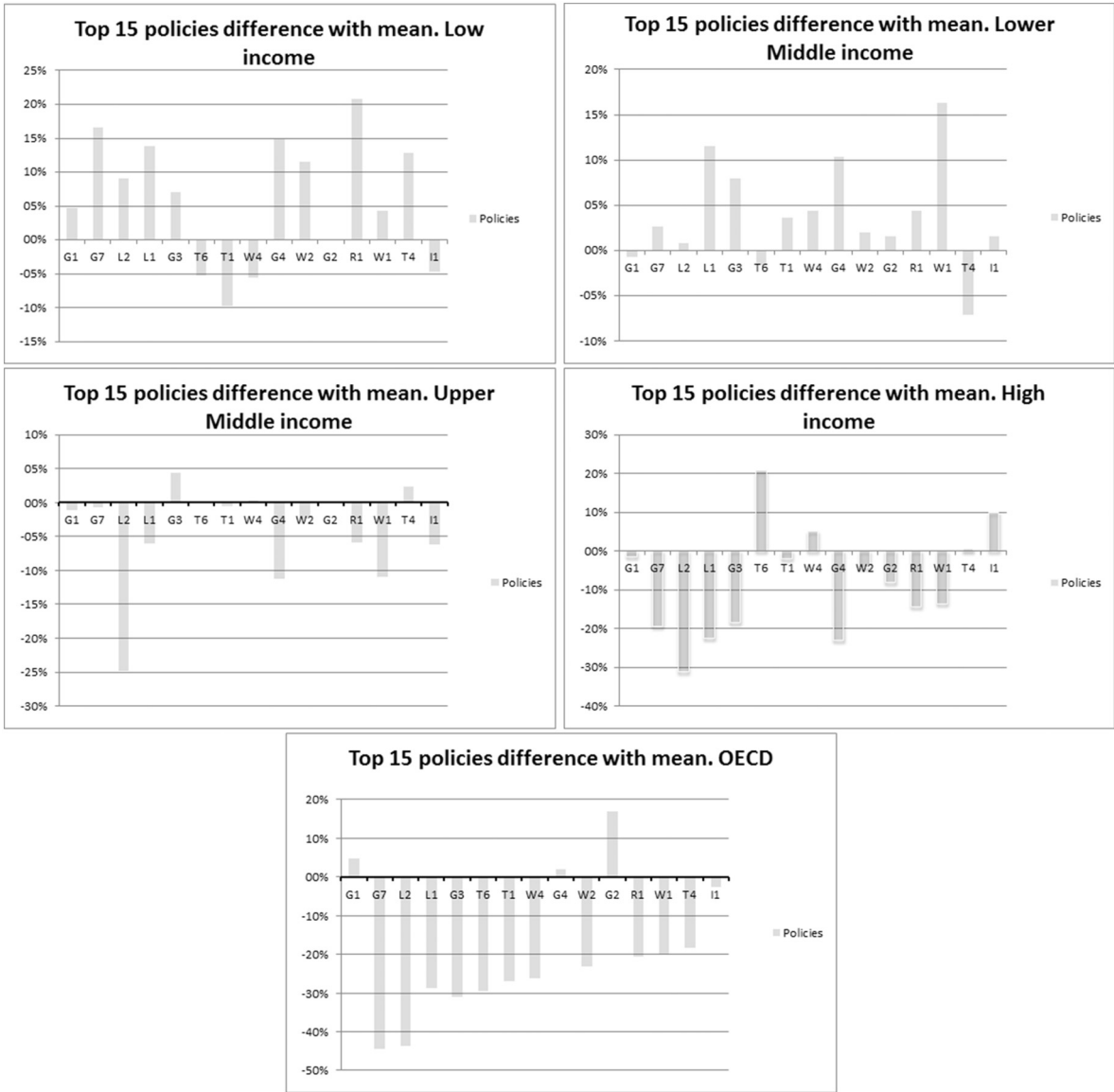


Fig. 1. Top 15 policies. Differences of each policy with respect to the global mean by income groups.  
Source: Own elaboration on the basis of INDCs submitted to the COP21.

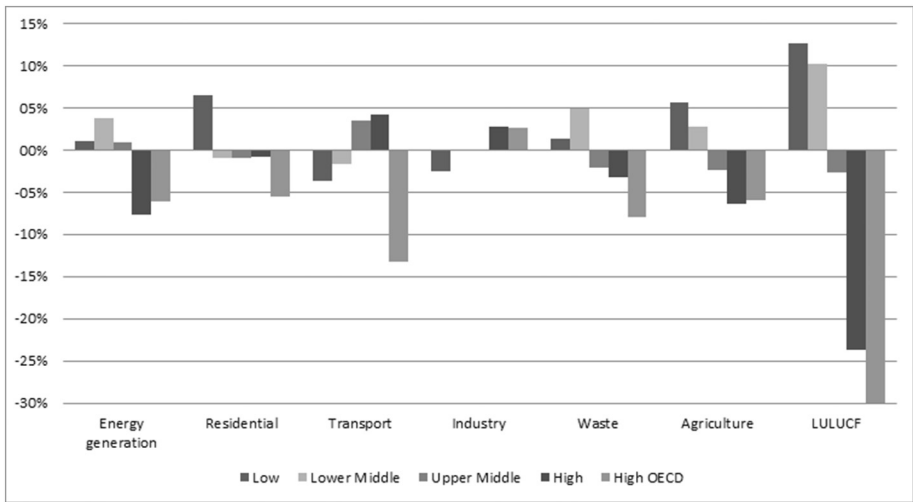


Fig. 2. Sectoral relevance by income groups. Differences with respect to global sectoral mean.  
Source: Own elaboration on the basis of INDCs submitted to COP21.

**Table 4**  
Overview of policies by country.

	Country	Energy					Resid.		Transport				Industry			Waste			Agric.		LULUCF		
1	Afghanistan	G1	G3	G4			R1						I9		W4		A2						
2	Albania	G											I										
3	Andorra	G													W								
4	Angola	G1	G3						T4								A4		L1	L2			
5	Antigua y Barbuda	G1							T1						W2								
6	Algeria	G1	G2	G8					T1				I8						L1	L2			
7	Argentina	G1	G7						T4	T6	T7								L1				
8	Armenia	G1	G7						T3	T5									L1	L2			
9	Australia	G1	G7						T1														
10	Azerbaijan	G1	G2	G3	G5	G6	R2	R4	T5	T6	T9		I8	I9	W4		A1	A5		L2			
11	Bahamas	G1	G2				R2	R3	T1	T2	T10												
12	Bahrain																						
13	Bangladesh	G1	G2	G4	G5	G7	R1		T1	T6	T7		I1		W2	W4	A1	A3		L2			
14	Barbados	G1	G7												W2								
15	Belize	G1	G7				R		T1	T4	T6								L1	L2			
16	Benin	G1	G2	G3			R		T6						W		A1		L1	L2			
17	Bhutan	G1	G7						T1	T6	T7		T10	I1	I5	W1	W4	A2	A5	L1			
18	Belarus																		L2				
19	Bolivia	G1	G4																L1	L2			
20	Bosnia-Herzegovina	G1	G3	G4			R1	R4					I7										
21	Botswana																						
22	Brazil	G1	G7						T1	T6			I1						L1	L2			
23	Brunei	G1	G8												W2								
24	Burkina Faso	G1	G3	G6			R1	R2	T1	T4					W2		A5		L1	L2			
25	Burundi	G1	G3	G7			R1								W2	W4							
26	Cabo Verde	G1	G3	G7			R1		T1	T5					W1	W2	W3			L2			
27	Cambodia	G1	G3				R		T1	T5	T6		I1				A5		L1	L2			
28	Cameroon	G1	G7												W1	W4	A1		L1				
29	Canada	G1	G2						T1	T2			I8										
30	Chad	G1	G5												W4					L2			
31	Chile	G1	G4						T2				I1										
32	China	G1	G2	G5					T1	T6	T8	T9	T10	I3	I5	I6	I7	W1	W3	A4	A5	L1	L2
33	Colombia																						
34	Comores	G1	G2	G6											W2	W4			L1	L2			
35	Congo	G1	G4														A1		L1	L2			
36	Cook Islands	G1	G6	G7																			
37	Ivory Coast	G1	G2	G7					T1	T8			I1	I2	W1	W2	W4	A1	L1				
38	Costa Rica	G1	G4	G7	G8		R						I1						L1	L2			
39	Cuba	G1	G3				R1	R2									A5						
40	Djibouti	G1	G6				R		T2	T6													
41	Dominica	G1	G3	G7					T5						W4								
42	Ecuador	G1	G2				R1		T7										L1	L2			
43	Egypt	G1	G7				R3		T1	T6	T7		I1	I2	I3	I8	W1	W4	A3	A5			
44	El Salvador	G1	G7				R3		T8								A1						
45	Eritrea	G1	G4				R1	R2	T2	T4			I2		W1	W2	A5		L2				
46	Ethiopia	G1					R		T1				I1				A1		L1				
47	Fiji	G1	G7						T4	T5													
48	Philippines																						
49	Gabon	G1	G2	G7					T2	T6	T9		I8						L1				
50	Gambia	G1	G6	G7			R1	R3	T1						W1		A3	A4	L2				
51	Georgia																		L1	L2			
52	Ghana	G1	G7				R1	R2	T6				I1	I2	W1				L1				
53	Grenada	G1	G7						T2	T3	T4				W2	W4			L1	L2			
54	Guatemala																						
55	Guinea	G1	G4	G7															L1	L2			
56	Guinea Bissau	G1																	L1	L2			
57	Equatorial Guinea	G1							T1	T6	T8		I1		W1		A2		L1	L2			
58	Guyana	G1	G3	G7			R1	R2	R4				I2				A5		L1	L2			
59	Haithi																						
60	Iraq																						
61	Honduras																						
62	India	G1	G3	G4	G5	G6	R2	R3	T1	T4	T5	T6	T7		W1	W2	W5			L2			
63	Indonesia	G1	G7												W1	W4		A1	L1	L2			
64	Iran																						
65	Iceland	G1	G2				R						I8										
66	Marshall Islands	G1	G3	G7			R1		T1	T4	T5				W4								
67	Israel	G1	G2	G7					T6														
68	Jamaica	G1	G7						T1	T3													
69	Japan	G1	G4				R		T1	T5	T6	T7	I1	I2	W1	W4	A4		L1	L2			
70	Jordan	G1	G2	G3	G7		R3		T1	T5	T6	T7	I2		W4				L2				
71	Kazakhstan	G1	G7												W4				L2				
72	Kenya	G1	G7				R1		T1						W4		A2		L2				
73	Kiribati	G1	G3						T4										L1	L2			
74	Kuwait																						

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Table 4 (continued)

	Country	Energy			Resid.		Transport			Industry			Waste		Agric.			LULUCF	
75	Kyrgyzstan																		
76	Lao	G1	G4				T4	T6	T9										
77	Lesotho	G1	G4	G6	R1	R2	T1	T6		I1			W1	W4				L1	L2
78	Lebanon	G1	G7																
79	Liberia	G1	G4	G7	R1														
80	Liechtenstein																		
81	Macedonia																		
82	Madagascar	G1	G4	G7	R1								W1	W2	A2	A3		L1	L2
83	Malaysia																		
84	Malawi	G1	G3		R1	R3	T4	T6		I4	I7		W1	W2	A1	A4		L1	L2
85	Maldives																		
86	Mali	G1	G4												A2	A3	A4		
87	Morocco	G1	G2	G7									W1	W4	A1			L2	
88	Mauritius	G1	G2	G4			T5						W2		A2			L2	
89	Mauritania	G1	G4	G7			T1	T2											
90	Mexico																		
91	Micronesia																		
92	Moldova																		
93	Monaco						T5	T6	T10										
94	Mongolia	G1	G5	G6	R1	R3	T2	T5	T6	T9	I1	I2	I4	W1	W2	W4	A4	A5	
95	Montenegro																		
96	Mozambique	G1	G2				T4						W1	W4				L1	L2
97	Myanmar	G1	G3	G4	G7	R1												L1	L2
98	Namibia	G1				R	T2	T6										L1	
99	Nauru																		
100	Nepal	G1				R1	T6	T10					W2					L1	L2
101	Niger	G1	G2	G4		R							W2					L2	
102	Nigeria	G1	G2	G3	G7		T2	T6	T7	T9	I1	I8	I9		A2			L1	
103	Niue	G1	G7				T1	T5										L1	
104	Norway	G1									I1	I7							
105	New Zealand																		
106	Oman	G1	G7								I1	I8							
107	Pakistan																		
108	Palau	G1	G3	G4	R		T2	T4	T6				W2						
109	Papua New Guinea	G1	G7		T1	T6	T7											L1	L2
110	Paraguay	G1	G7				T7											L2	
111	Peru																		
112	Qatar	G1	G7								I1	I7							
113	DR Congo	G1	G3												A1				
114	Central African Republic	G1	G4		R1	R2	T4						W1					L1	L2
115	Republic of Korea																		
116	Dominican Republic																		
117	Rwanda	G1	G2	G3	G6	R1	T2	T4	T6	T7	I1	I3	W2					L1	
118	Russia																		
119	Solomon	G1	G3																
120	Samoa	G1	G3																
121	San Marino	G1	G8		R3		T8						W4						
122	St Kitts	G1	G6	G7	G8		T1	T2	T7	T8	T9								
123	St Lucia	G1				R3	T1	T2					W4					L1	
124	Santo Tomé	G1	G3																
125	Saudi Arabia	G1	G7								I7	I8							
126	Senegal	G1	G3	G4	G7	G2	R1	T6			I4		W2		A3	A5		L1	L2
127	Serbia																		
128	Seychelles	G1			R		T2	T4	T5	T6			W4						
129	Sierra Leone	G1	G3		R4		T1	T6	T4				W1	W2	A2	A5			
130	Singapur																		
131	Somalia	G1																	
132	Sri Lanka						T1						W1	W2	W4			L1	
133	St Vincent and the Grenadines	G1	G3	G7		R3	T2	T6										L1	L2
134	South Africa	G1					T5				I7								
135	Sudan	G1	G2	G3	G7								W1	W2	W4			L1	L2
136	South Sudan	G1	G7			R	T2												
137	Switzerland																		
138	Surinam	G1	G3		R		T4						W2					L1	
139	Swazilandia																		
140	Thailand	G1	G6	G7															
141	Tajikistan	G1	G6								I5								
142	Tanzania	G1	G2	G4	G6	R	T6	T7											
143	Togo	G1				R	T4								A3			L1	
144	Tonga	G1	G3	G6		R													
145	Trinidad and Tobago																		
146	Tunez	G1			R						I4		W2	W5				L2	
147	Turkmenistan																		
148	Turkey	G1	G3	G6		R3	T6	T7	T8		I1		W1	W2	W4	A1	A4		L2
149	Tuvalu	G1	G3	G7															

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Table 4 (continued)

	Country	Energy					Resid.	Transport					Industry	Waste	Agric.			LULUCF		
150	UAE	G1	G2					R3	T1	T6	T7		I1	W4						
151	Ukraine																			
152	EU28																			
153	Uganda	G1	G3	G4				R1	T1						A2	A5	L1	L2		
154	Uruguay	G1							T1	T4	T5	T6	T7	I4	W4	A3	A4	A5	L2	
155	USA	G1						R3	T1					I8	W4					
156	Vanuatu	G1	G3	G4	G7														L1	
157	Venezuela	G1	G3	G7				R2	R3	R4	T6		I4	I7	I8	W4				
158	Vietnam	G1	G2	G7				R	T1					W1	W2	A5			L1	L2
159	Yemen	G1	G2	G3	G4	G7	R3	R4	T1					I2	W2	A5				
160	Zambia	G1	G3	G4				R1	T4							A2	A5	L1		
161	Zimbabwe	G1	G3	G4	G5	G7	R3	T4						W4						

Source: Own compilation on the basis of INDCs submitted to the COP21.

calculation, if we take the weighted mean as each country's contribution to world emissions (in 2014), the result would be an increase in world emissions of 31.5%. This result can basically be explained by the top 12 polluters, which will be analysed separately below.

The setting in which mitigation policies are carried out is not much rosier. In the best of cases (conditional on the reception of external support from countries not included in Annex I), each country would emit an average of 37.8% more than in the years 2005–2015. When this is weighted, the figure would be a 19.3% increase due to the contribution of some Top 12 polluters, as we discussed in the next subsection. In the least optimistic case, in which none of the conditional policies are put into practice, each country would modify their emissions on average with respect to the base interval by 75.0%. If this is weighted, emissions would increase on a global level around 25.8%.

Although the INDCs always talk about reductions, they are seen in GHG emissions intensity (CO<sub>2</sub>eq/GDP) or over a BAU setting. Predicting the countries where the GDP will grow much more than their emissions and the BAU settings being on the increase, the final result is that of a net increase in GHG emissions, which cancels out the reductions in the Annex I countries and Brazil. India, for instance, aims to more than quadruple their emissions, China aims to increase by 39.8%, while other countries such as Burundi, Papua New Guinea, Liberia, Bangladesh or Congo oscillate around a growth factor of between 3 and 4. The trend scenarios of Congo and Burundi stand out especially, as they plan to multiply their emissions by more than 6 and 5 times, respectively.

In effect, Fig. 3 reflects a decreasing tendency in mean emissions as income rises. However, the weighted mean shows an initially upward trajectory, which then decreases as the income level increases. This is so because the low-income countries currently represent a very small fraction of the emissions, while India (lower middle) would explain the highest point. On the other hand, the upper middle countries see China's increase compensated for by the absolute reduction in emissions proposed by Brazil. As can be seen, the OECD countries (all of those in

Annex I) are the only ones that plan to make an absolute reduction in emissions.

Finally, as can be seen in Table 7, the countries that use their resources less efficiently (measured in dollars by percent unit of absolute reduction or over the BAU scenario) are LDCs.<sup>4</sup> This is due to two reasons. The first one is because they are the countries that plan to depend on greater external funding. The second one is because their mitigation policies would be more than compensated for by economic growth.

### 3.5. The Top 12 Polluters Pathway

Top 12 polluters encompasses 60% of world population and 72.2% of GHG emissions. Policies and objectives established by this group will affect 6 out of 10 world inhabitants (and probably increasing as population in China, India and others do not stop rising). Regarding the information provided by Top 12 polluters can be seen (Table 6) that policies information varies among them, but financial information is of low quality in general. In the first place of policies these countries choose a transition towards a renewable electricity mix. In the second place in most used policies by, Top 12 polluters are the improvement in the efficiency of private vehicles (77%).

As a result of the Top 12 policies and emissions reduction objectives, the whole Paris Agreement expected outcomes vary. In fact, when the average emissions reduction objectives are weighted by the countries contribution to GHG world emissions, the result is lower. This is because the increases in China and India (39.8% and 232.78%) respectively) are offset by the reduction compulsorily proposed by Annex I countries plus Brazil. Nevertheless, if just China and India are taken apart, Paris Agreement expected outcomes would be rather different. For instance, without their contribution, the emissions would decrease by 4.0% in the Conditional scenario, while they would slightly rise by 2.5% unconditionally. In other words, given the past behaviour of DCs economies, the incorporation of China and India to their consumption

Table 5

Financial allocation by income group (billions US\$). Total and effort related to GDP.

	Mitigation (bs US\$)	% Over total	Adaptation (bs US \$)	% Over total	Other (bs US \$)	Total (bs US \$)*	GDP (%)	% External support**
Low	387.0	61.8%	156.4	25.0%	82.5	625.8	204.6%	87.1%
Lower middle	1016.3	35.9%	323.3	11.4%	1492.3	2831.8	99.1%	73.2%
Upper middle	1793.3	91.5%	167.4	8.5%	0.0	1960.7	69.4%	92.7%
High	6.2	78.6%	1.5	19.4%	0.2	7.9	22.7%	77.8%
High OECD	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Top 12 polluters	846.5	33.6%	222.8	8.8%	1452.3	2521.6	89.2%	–
TOTAL	3202.7	83.2%	648.5	16.8%	1574.9	5426.2	7.3%	41.4%

Source: Own compilation on the basis of INDCs submitted to COP21. GDP (constant 2005 US\$). \* The totals in bs US\$ are not always the sum of Mitigation + Adaptation + Other because some INDCs offer totals with differences whose origin is not explained. \*\* The percentage represents the proportion of external resources required by those INDCs that do offer data. However, the total percentage is the total amount of external resources required by all the plans over the total financing of the all the INDCs, including those that have no breakdowns.

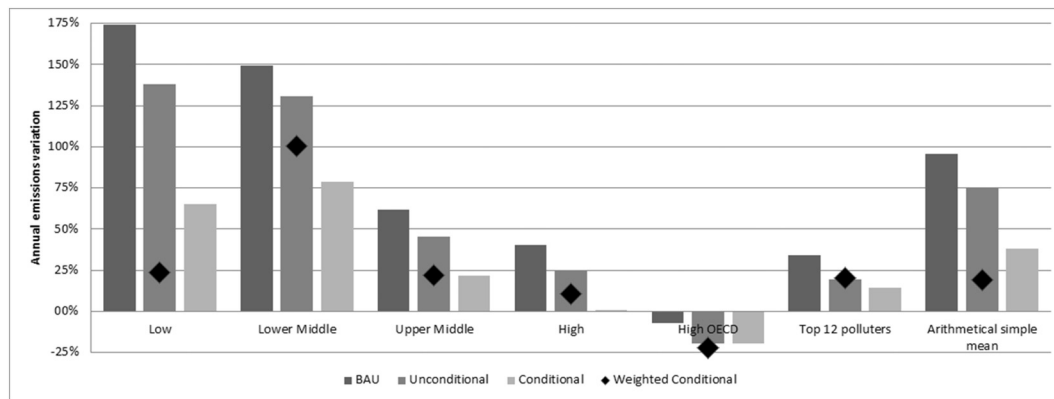


Fig. 3. Emissions variations by income level and different scenarios from baseline 2005–2015 to 2030.

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the INDCs submitted to COP21.

Table 6

Overview of Top12 polluters. Information, emissions and financial resources.

	Absolute emissions variation respect 2005 (%)			Main policies*	Share of total emissions
	BAU	Unc	Cond		
China	–	39.8%	–	G1, G2, G5, T1, T6, T8, T10, I3, I5, I6, I7, W1, W3, A4, A5, L1, L2	23.9%
U.S.A.	–	– 28.0%	–	G1, R3, T1, I8, W4	12.1%
EU-28	–	– 34.8%	–	No information.	9.0%
India	–	232.8%	–	G1, G3, G5, G6, R2, R3, T1, T4, T5, T6, T7, W1, W2, W5, L2	5.7%
Brazil	–	– 43.0%	–	G1, G7, T1, T6, I1, L1, L2	5.7%
Russian Fed.	–	10.3%	–	No information.	5.3%
Japan	–	– 22.7%	–	G1, G4, R, T1, T5, T6, T7, I1, I2, W1, W4, A4, L1, L2	2.8%
Canada	35.0%	– 30.0%	–	No information.	2.0%
Congo, DR	74.0%	74.0%	44.4%	G1, G3, A1	1.5%
Indonesia	123.7%	65.6%	32.0%	G1, G7, W1, W4, A1, L1, L2	1.5%
Australia	–	– 28.0%	–	G1, G7, T1	1.5%
Korean Rep.	51.9%	– 4.3%	–	No information.	1.3%
Total	71.2%	26.3%	10.5%		72.2%
Weighted	24.5%	20.5%	19.2%		

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the INDCs analysed. \*According to the code stated in Table 2.

and production patterns would be the main reason why the Paris Agreement objectives are so difficult to achieve. Paradoxically, without the economic contribution of India (as China does not provide finance information) the allocation of resources destined to mitigation would be almost halved in terms of world GDP, dropping to 3.9%.

#### 4. Economic and Environmental Features of INDCs

In order to globally evaluate the INDCs, we follow the definition of Fischer-Kowalski (2011) of a socio-metabolic transition towards sustainability as that in which society does not pass the limits imposed by the biophysical system upon which it depends. To do this, it is not enough to analyse the sufficiency or insufficiency of the reduction in GHG emissions to the atmosphere. It is also necessary to evaluate the energy and material sustainability of the suggested policies to promote a socio-economic structure. Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 contrast policies collected in the INDCs (see Section 3.2) with the literature. Supported in this literature, we discuss the feasibility of INDCs proposed policies and its capability to jointly achieve the 2 °C objective. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 follow up the same rationale but referring to finance (see Section 3.3) and emissions reduction (see Section 3.4) respectively instead of policies. The variables through which the INDCs are classified are as follows: i/ socio-economic impact of the transition; ii/ focus on energy management; iii/ substitution of non-renewable sources; iv/ the

<sup>4</sup> The high index shown by the upper middle countries is due to the high inefficiency in reducing emissions of the funding used by Iran (77.3MM\$ per percent unit of reduction over the BAU scenario).

role of technology; v/ equality of the transition; vi/ degree of compliance with emission reductions.

##### 4.1. Socio-economic Impact

Although the Director of Strategies of the UNFCCC has admitted that the fight against climate change requires a “fundamental transformation in the way we use and produce energy” (Thorgeirsson, 2015), there is a generalized belief that this is consistent with maintaining the current socio-economic system (Spash, 2016).

Although numerous INDCs, such as China, appeal to economic growth and the modernization of their productive structure as a mitigation strategy, there is abundant empirical evidence of the string correlation between growth and environmental impact (de Bruyn et al., 1998; Stern, 2004; Tapia-Granados and Carpintero, 2013; Tapia-Granados et al., 2012; Wagner, 2008; Carpintero, 2005). Far from there being a process of dematerialization associated with economic growth (Shafik, 1994),<sup>5</sup> what has been observed is a process of environmental load displacement (Peng et al., 2016; Muradian et al., 2002; Cole, 2004). The transfer of “dirty” production to poor regions has been facilitated by productive specialization, commerce and international finance (Batra et al., 1998; Andersson and Lindroth, 2001; Steen-Olsen et al., 2012). In addition, we know that both technological industry (Sun-Hee Park and Naguib Pellow, 2002) and, in general, industrial modernization and the switch to a tertiary economy (Carpintero, 2003)

<sup>5</sup> As established by the Environmental Kuznets Curve.

are great consumers of both energy and materials.

On the other hand, numerous INDCs, of note among them being Bangladesh, Cameroon, Turkey or Morocco, express their interest in modernizing their agricultural systems, although they do not explain how this might mitigate the emissions of GHG. However, history tells us that agricultural modernization turns into a process of subordination to industry, making the former dependent on the latter and closely linked to oil products.<sup>6</sup> Thus, agriculture modernization would only result in an increase in both direct and indirect emissions. The indirect emissions are not usually assigned to agriculture, which are normally reduced to methane from livestock and the directly emitted waste. This way, the contribution of modern agriculture to climate change is often undervalued.

For all the above reasons, the link between economic growth and wellbeing, and also between growth and environmental sustainability, is weakening, as an abundant literature on ecological economics has long been stressing (Victor, 2013; Jackson, 2011). Measures from industrial ecology approach, followed by Rwanda among others, would contribute in a more effective way to reduce environmental impacts (Ivner and Broberg, 2015; Wen and Meng, 2015; Yu et al., 2015; Côte and Liu, 2016). Given the environmental costs of modern agriculture, it would be much more interesting to transit towards agroecology, with a similar performance for modern agriculture but with less dependence on petroleum and environmental impacts (Altieri, 1995; Gliessman, 2006; Badgley et al., 2007; Pretty et al., 2003; Seufert et al., 2012). This model would be based on a proximity system of agricultural foodstuffs that would reduce the need for transport as well as a less meat intensive diet. Bhutan, for instance, advocates encouraging organic farming. China, on the other hand, advocates measures aimed at encouraging an agricultural system that adequately closes the ecological cycles, as well as reaching “zero growth” in pesticides and herbicides (intensive in petroleum use).

#### 4.2. Demand Side Management Policies

With the exception of a few countries, such as Algeria, Barbados, Bhutan or Costa Rica, the majority of the INDCs assume there will be a growing demand for energy, i.e., energy demand is considered as an exogenous variable. Instead of proposing ways to reduce energy demand, beyond the general compromise with efficiency gains, the INDCs focus on changing the energy mix. However, this view would seem to ignore the energy resources we have counted on in the past and which can be counted on in the future. The development and growth of industrial society cannot be understood without the concurrence of fossil fuels and their enormous energy potential (Hall and Klitgaard, 2011; Fouquet, 2016). There are, therefore, at least two factors that seriously compromise this basic assumption of the great majority of INDCs and government sources studied.

First of all, the arrival of the conventional peak oil (Hubbert, 1956; ASPO, 2008; IEA, 2010) has opened the door for non-conventional oil with a much lower energy performance (EROEI<sup>7</sup>) (Hall and Klitgaard, 2012), which are also more expensive and contaminating to extract (Heinberg, 2013). This, together with the foreseeable arrival of extraction peaks in other vitally important energy sources (Heinberg, 2007), leads us to anticipate risks for the future energy supply. Moreover, the International Energy Agency (IEA) (2016) recognized that it is not assured that investments in new oil explorations will be enough to meet demand due to high decline in output from existing fields. Secondly, if the transitions towards low-carbon economies of the INDCs are

<sup>6</sup> Related with its use in making pesticides and herbicides, fuel for machines and that associated with the transport needed to carry the food from where it is produced to where it is consumed (a distance that this process increases).

<sup>7</sup> Energy returned on energy invested (EROEI) is the mean energy performance as the relation between the amount of energy obtained by each unit of energy invested in a process.

to be taken seriously, leaving a high proportion of fossil fuels underground should be mandatory (McGlade and Ekins, 2015). The substitution of the energy they provide (to say nothing of whether such provision will get larger or not) by other sources free from GHGs would seem to be complicated, if not accompanied by a reduction in energy consumption, as we shall see below.

The main hurdle to follow this path is that it implies changing consumption and production patterns by means of demand side management policies (Creutzig et al., 2016), especially in DCs and emergent countries. Nevertheless, these policies applied to agriculture, transport, buildings and other sectors show interesting results for climate change mitigation. For instance, households' food consumption has high impacts on energy consumption and direct and indirect emissions (Di Donato et al., 2015). Therefore, changes in diets would be able to reduce by 35% GHG emissions (Stehfest et al., 2009), but it would require a huge conversion in agro-alimentary sector. In addition, reduction of transport needs would require re-organizing the cities design once all of their infrastructures are yet installed. Finally, this reduction in transport needs could need shorter commercialization channels and reducing the volume of international trade.

#### 4.3. Substitution of Non-renewable Energies

On applying a management approach to the energy supply, the INDCs only consider a substitution of the current energy mix by another one with a greater renewable and/or nuclear proportion. Nevertheless, the ability to substitute one technology for another is far from being perfect.

The support or maintenance of nuclear energy is subject to limitations as far as resources goes, and this should be taken into account. If the forecast of the IEA turns out to be true, the extraction peak of uranium may well be reached in the next few decades (Zittel and Schindler, 2006). On the other hand, the substitution by biomass (in particular biofuels) is also subject to strong limitations (de Castro et al., 2014; Pimentel et al., 2007; Patzek, 2004). Due to the strong dependence of modern agriculture on fossil fuels, agrofuels present a very poor EROEI (de Castro et al., 2014). Furthermore, their cultivation enters into competition with land dedicated to food production, upon which it would exercise such pressure as to possibly result in price rises.

In addition, the electrification of the economy, even if it could be done totally through renewable sources, would not be simple at all. In this sense, there are sound arguments to sustain that renewable sources do not have sufficient capacity to replace the energy potential of fossil fuels (Moriarty and Honnery, 2016; Capellán-Pérez et al., 2014, 2015; de Castro et al., 2011, 2013; Hoogwijk, 2004). There are also rigidities in the substitution of sources due to the different uses they have. For instance, the fuel used in planes, transport and heavy industry cannot simply be substituted by electric energy. In spite of some meritorious efforts in this sense, it would seem clear that it is very difficult to consider a simple technological exchange in the energy mix if it is not accompanied by a reduction in energy consumption.

Finally, it is worth to mention that in absence of a clear policy of leaving fossil fuels underground (McGlade and Ekins, 2015), the international community could face the green paradox. As the market penetration of non-fossil sources increases, their demand would fall, leading to decrease of prices. If there is no political decision to leave fossil fuels underground, their consumption will probably be rebooted via prices incentives. So, if these circumstances are to be avoided, changing the energy mix through is not enough to address decarbonisation.

#### 4.4. The Role of Technology

The transition towards a hypocarbon model is already possible today, but it would involve a great socio-economic transformation, as stated before. Therefore, technological solutions are proposed,

prominently, those referred to efficiency. These policies are the ones that have captured the most funding in recent years<sup>8</sup> (Buchner et al., 2015) and are the preferred policies of the INDCs. Although they are destined to reducing energy consumption, the rebound effect (Polimeni et al., 2008; Blake, 2005; Carpintero, 2003; Duarte et al., 2013) may paradoxically cause the opposite effect, since the most efficient technology reduces the price and increases consumption beyond the initial reduction.

A reflection of this point of view would be carbon capture and storage (CCS) or afforestation, which would allow the economy system to keep emitting GHGs into the atmosphere. For instance, Saudi Arabia, one of the main world oil producers, focus on capturing CO<sub>2</sub> from their fields rather than leaving the fossil fuel underground and diversify its economy. The first of them has shown it can face up to obstacles that are difficult to overcome in order to be economically viable (Raveendran, 2013; Leung et al., 2014). On the other hand, afforestation is another of the most widely used measures among the INDCs, especially in LDCs. However, as the forestry land competes with agriculture land, a strong increase in forested areas could push up the prices of prime materials for food and biofuels. In the best of cases, the afforestation of the most ambitious countries could offset deforestation to other countries in order to meet the farmland global requirements (Nilsson and Schopfhauser, 1995; Alig et al., 1997; Murray et al., 2004; Ewers and Rodrigues, 2008; González-Eguino et al., 2016). It is, therefore, a policy that could be incompatible with the current agro-alimentary model and the promotion of biofuels, or maybe subject to filtrations that would convert afforestation into a neutral climate policy.

Although it is a critical sector (Capellán-Pérez et al., 2014), the transition towards sustainable transport is of secondary importance in the INDCs and there are serious difficulties when attempting to carry it out. As mentioned above, it would be extremely difficult to supply a growing fleet of private vehicles by substituting fossil fuels for electricity or biofuels. In addition, their deployment would enter into conflict with the availability of such materials as lithium (Ortego et al., 2016) and require strong institutional support for the creation of niches in the market and infrastructures. This means that the process could take decades to complete (Kemp et al., 1998; Fouquet, 2010). In any case, transport electrification is not even a very demanded policy in INDCs, as just 13.5% chooses it. Rather, hybrid and more efficient vehicles is the most demanded transport policy among the INDCs.

#### 4.5. Transition Equity

Emergent medium income countries, such as China or India, interpret equity in the transition as an excuse to maintain the growth of their emissions. The return to individual, voluntary contributions agreed on in the Paris Agreement has only further contributed to sustaining this point of view. However, the obligatory nature of the transfer of resources from the DCs to the LDCs has led to the consideration of the INDCs of the DCs as adequate in terms of equity on an individual level. Nevertheless, the global view indicates a different reality, since the lack of a globally integrated agreement makes it ineffective. The measures that delve into the need to redistribute the effort are reduced to the international climate funding institutions that work through individual projects and to bilateral agreements between DCs and the rest.

The commitment achieved in the Copenhagen Agreement (renewed in Paris) to mobilize 100MM \$ annually from DCs to LDCs has not only not been kept until now, but falls far short of the needs detected in the INDCs by the LDCs. The total external support distributed between 2020 and 2030 results in the need of 160 MM\$ annually. Conversely, achieving a low-carbon energy sector will require an average of 1.2 trillion \$ in additional investments every year until 2050 (IEA, 2014).

However, the INDCs just compromise 286.45MM \$ annually from the total accredited investment. The comparison highlights the fact that, in the best of cases, the financial information of the INDCs is extremely deficient and that, if taken as an approximation, the Paris Agreement would be inefficient in achieving its means of implementation.

According to the *Landscape of Climate Change* (Buchner et al., 2015), the climate and development institutions only provided 26% of the funding, of which half was national, so only 13% came from bilateral and multilateral institutions. Furthermore, 74% of all climate investment (both public and private) remained in the country of origin, reaching 94% in the case of private funding. This shows that private funding tends not to have an important role in the equity of the transit. Similarly, by its very nature, and in the absence of adequate incentives, private funding is subject to the rhythms and needs of the enterprises, which has proven to be ineffective in the fight against climate change (Atteridge, 2011). However, the weight of private funding in climate policies has been constantly increasing, from 56% of the total in 2011 to 62% in 2015 (Buchner et al., 2011; Buchner et al., 2015). In the light of all this, it would not seem to be a good trend for promoting equity, efficiency and multilateralism.

The most important incentives instrument in climate funding is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which is widely incorporated into the INDCs. The CDM, as described previously, which is theoretically neutral in so far as emissions reductions is concerned, could be contributing to their increase. This would be because of problems in determining additionality or the incorrect limitation in the number of years projects can last (Eriksson et al., 2014). Funding through projects is, indeed, one of the main lagoons in a global climate policy, since the climate finance institutions (GCF, GEF, etc.) finance projects and do not obey an equitable global transit strategy that can effectively reduce emissions.

#### 4.6. Compliance with the Objectives of Emissions Reductions

As the Non-Annex 1 countries are allowed to present their mitigation objectives on a trend scenario, the Paris Agreement ends up causing substantial increases, on a global scale, of GHG emissions. In addition, these figures are obtained on the basis of several conservative suppositions. Thus, it is considered that the reductions of the Annex 1 countries will be complied with and are also accounted for as BAU scenarios. In those INDCs that offer a reduction interval, they have opted for the upper bound; while, in the “Conditional” scenario, they assume that all the external funding is received. These increases in annual emissions, much higher than the planet's impact absorption capacity, would go against the principal objective of the Paris Agreement: not surpassing the 2 °C above preindustrial levels.

Supposing that the proportion each country contributes to world emissions does not vary too much, if we take the weighted mean in each scenario, while maintaining the level reached between 2030 and 2050 constant, then the world temperature would increase by at least 3 °C (IPCC, 2014). Even the IEA (2016) assumes increasing emissions in all their scenarios. Should annual emissions continue to increase in the same proportion, a rise of 4 °C would be practically guaranteed. This increase would endanger humanity's essential food production and would irreversibly worsen the problems related to extreme meteorological phenomena (IPCC, 2014). Thus, we will probably see a transfer of resources from mitigation and the regular economic activities to the defensive efforts of adaptation.

### 5. Conclusions

The Paris Agreement sets up a landscape in which the interventions of the agents that bring about the transition will be carried out. In spite of the heterogeneity in the documentation of the INDCs, this paper proposes a classification of the characteristics of the commitments of each country. This classification and its results (summarised in Table 7)

<sup>8</sup> In its less conservative range (HSBC, 2014).



**Table 7**  
Overview of main results (excluding policies).

	General information quality		Financial information quality		Finance (bs \$)	Financial effort (% over GDP)	External financial support (%) <sup>a</sup>	BaU	Conditional variation (respect 2005–2015)	Unconditional Variation (respect 2005–2015)	Financial effectiveness (\$/Absolute reduction)	Emissions share <sup>b</sup>
Income level	High	Low	High	Low	Finance			Emissions				
Low	30.0%	6.7%	26.7%	16.7%	625.8	204.6%	87.1%	174.3%	65.2%	137.9%	15.9	5.2%
Lower Middle	22.2%	22.2%	20.0%	53.3%	2831.8	99.1%	73.2%	149.2%	78.7%	130.5%	1.2	16.5%
Upper Middle	14.9%	34.0%	4.3%	61.7%	1960.7	69.4%	92.7%	61.7%	21.8%	45.4%	0.7	37.9%
High	9.1%	45.5%	4.5%	77.3%	7.9	22.7%	77.8%	40.0%	0.2%	24.2%	0.1	8.8%
High OECD	8.3%	66.7%	n.d.	100.0%	ND	ND	ND	– 7.0%	– 19.6%	– 19.6%	ND	29.4%
Top 12 <sup>c</sup>	16.7%	41.7%	0.0%	83.3%	2521.6	89.2%	–	34.2%	14.0%	19.3%	ND	72.2%
Global simple arithmetic mean and totals	18.5%	29.9%	12.7%	31.2%	5426.2	7.3%	41.4%	95.7%	37.8%	75.0%	6.8	97.8%
Weighted mean								31.5%	19.3%	25.8%		

Own elaboration.

<sup>a</sup> The percentage represents the proportion of external resources required by those INDCs that do offer data. However, the total percentage is the total amount of external resources required by all the plans over the total financing of the all the INDCs, including those that have no breakdowns.

<sup>b</sup> Share of global emissions (2012) according to EDGAR. The sum of all country groups does not account for 100% because of discarded INDCs and non-participant countries in COP.

<sup>c</sup> Top 12 polluter emissions variation are for base year 2005.

allows analyzing the different patterns of national proposals and the real effectiveness of the proposed measures.

Policies show certain patterns at global level (renewable electricity mix, efficiency, afforestation, etc.), but regional distribution matters too. The non-integrated, individual, voluntary approach of the Paris Agreement, under a free trade and capital flows framework, could lead policies in one region to be offset by the dynamic response in other regions. Responsibility of climate change falls on Developed Countries (DCs) and their consumption and production patterns. However, the incorporation of China and India to these patterns, sometimes in order to satisfy DCs demand through environmental load displacement, hinders the accomplishment of Paris Agreement even more. As long as the socioeconomic system remains unchanged, the objective of the Paris Agreement would have to face numerous challenges like these.

Another difficulty facing the full compliance of the INDCs is the voluntary nature of their commitment and the non-existence of any control, monitoring and penalization system. In addition, the low quality and scarce clarity of information provided concerning these individual commitments (only 18.5% provide good information on policies and emissions and 12.7% on finance) contributes to worsening difficulties for any kind of follow-up. What is more, the “Conditional” compliance of the INDCs is subject to the receipt, on the part of LDCs, of external funding that represents 41.4% of the total funding. Not only this, but the channelling of this funding (external and internal) through a model based on individual projects, carbon markets (through the CDM) and their growing dependence on private initiative, make for an uncertain future panorama. Ultimately, after burying the Kyoto

Protocol and the questionable results from the Copenhagen Agreement in 2009 (COP15), the renunciation of an integrated, global model in the Paris Agreement seems to lead to expected results that will be weak. In addition, geographical, institutional and biophysical constraints matter, dynamically adjusting the consequences of policies submitted. Further climate agreements should take this into consideration in order to achieve effective results.

Thus, from the detailed review of the INDCs, it can be concluded that, in the best of cases, annual world emissions would increase by around 19.3% in 2030 with respect to the base interval (2005–2015). Even so, this supposes a reduction in comparison with the 31.5% increase projected by the BAU scenario in which no measures are taken. Should this level remain constant between 2030 and 2050, the world temperature would increase by at least 3 °C (IPCC, 2014). Should annual emissions continue to increase in the same proportion, an increase of 4 °C would practically be assured. Adaptation of natural and economic systems to climate change will thus have to be addressed in the near future.

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## Annex A. Methodological Annex

The heterogeneity of the data in the INDCs has forced us to make a series of hypotheses, which are summarized in the [Methodology](#) section and are set out in detail here.

The policies, classified using codes, have been recorded country by country, grouped in the sectors described above. To carry out the analysis, and to establish comparisons, the proportion of countries adopting each policy over the total number of countries providing information has been calculated. This reduces the analysis to 126 of the 161 INDCs submitted (representing 188 countries). In order to estimate the interest of each group of countries by income, we have calculated the mean of these proportions in each sector.

As for funding, we have collected the data offered in the INDCs in dollars. Although the base varies in some of them, in most of them there is no mention of this aspect, so the quantities expressed in dollars are subject to this limitation. To calculate the percentage of external support required by the INDCs that do not explicitly provide this information, we have assumed that it would be distributed uniformly, the proportion being that which represents the conditional reduction in emissions over the total reduction in emissions (conditional + unconditional).

We have calculated the variation in emissions of the INDCs in relation to the intensity of emissions in the following manner: having defined the intensity of emissions as

$$I = \frac{E}{GDP} \quad (A.1)$$

the following equation is solved:

$$\frac{((I_{2030} * GDP_{2030}) - (I_{BY} * GDP_{BY}))}{(I_{BY} * GDP_{BY})} - 100 = \Delta E. \quad (A.2)$$

where  $I_{2030/BY}$  is the intensity of emissions in 2030 and the base year respectively;  $GDP_{2030/BY}$  is the GDP in 2030 and the base year respectively; and  $\Delta E$  is the percentage variation of the emissions. Both China and India present their data in this way and require additional hypotheses. They have had to use the projections of the GDP for the year 2030 of the OECD.

In the case of the INDCs that apply a reduction on a BAU scenario, the procedure was as follows: applying arbitrary emissions of 100, the problem was solved using the following equation:

$$\frac{((100 * (1 + \Delta BAU) * (1 - \Delta PROP)) - 100)}{100} = \Delta E. \quad (A.3)$$

where  $\Delta BAU$  is the percentage variation of emissions in the BAU scenario;  $\Delta PROP$  is the proposed percentage reduction in emissions on the BAU scenario (conditional and unconditional, depending on the case); and  $\Delta E$  is the percentage variation in the emissions. BAU scenario refers to the emissions in the horizon year if policies were not applied, usually based on historical emissions trends. With a conservative assumption, we have considered that the INDCs which propose a reduction range will finally achieve the upper bound.

Regarding the policies analysis, we have to differentiate three analyses: policies at world level, policies at regional level, and sectoral-regional analysis. Policies at world level are assessed throughout the number of countries using each policy over total countries, according to Eq. (A4):

$$\alpha_W = \frac{\sum P_i}{N} \quad (A.4)$$

Being subscript  $i$  each policy, regardless the sector and  $\sum P_i$  the number of countries using each policy ( $P_{ij}$ ) considered and  $N$  the total number of countries. Top 15 policies are shown in Table 3. For the regional level, an analogous calculation is made:

$$\alpha_r = \frac{\sum P_{i,r}}{N_r} \quad (A.5)$$

where the numerator represents the same as in A4 but for region (income group)  $r$ . The denominator is the number of countries in region  $r$ . Fig. 1 shows the deviation from each top 15 policy share by income group to the world average, namely:  $\alpha_r - \alpha_W$ . Finally, we take the arithmetical mean of  $\alpha_r$  and  $\alpha_W$  by sector:

$$\alpha_{j,W} = \frac{\sum \alpha_W}{N_j}; \alpha_{j,r} = \frac{\sum \alpha_r}{N_j} \quad (A.6)$$

With  $N_j$  being the number of policies in each sector  $j$ . By proceeding this way, we obtain an approximation to the relative importance of each sector in the different regions and in the world. Finally, analogously to Fig. 1, Fig. 2 shows the deviation from each region to world:  $\alpha_{j,r} - \alpha_{j,W}$ .

## Annex B. Countries by Income Group

Income group	Countries
Low income	Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Rep., Chad, Comores, DR of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe.
Lower-Middle	Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Ghana, Guayana, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kiribati, Lao, Lesotho, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, St. Tome, Sudan, Tajikistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia.
Upper-Middle	Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belize, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Fiji, Gabon, Grenada, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazajstan, Lebanon, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Namibia, Palau, Paraguay, South Africa, St Kitts, St Lucia, Surinam, Thailand, Tonga, Tunes, Turkey, Tuvalu.
High	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brunei, Equatorial Guinea, Monaco, Oman, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, St. Vincent & Grenadines, U.A.E., Uruguay, Venezuela.
OECD	Australia, Canada, Chile, EU28, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korean Rep., New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, USA.

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